

# What's New in the MPDC

JULY 9, 2001

## MPDC BEGINS MAJOR NEW EFFORTS TO REDUCE SPEEDING AND SAVE LIVES

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The MPDC has begun using photo radar cameras and other high-tech tools in a major new effort to put the brakes on speeding and reduce the number of speeding-related crashes on DC streets and highways, Chief Ramsey announced this past week. On July 2, to coincide with the peak summer driving season, the MPDC began deploying mobile photo radar units – the first in the region – that will issue warning citations over the next month to drivers caught speeding. The warning notices are part of a campaign to educate motorists about the dangers of speeding and the Department's plans to crack down on this dangerous behavior using photo radar and other technologies. Over the last two years, 56-59 percent of

all traffic fatalities in DC involved

speeding. Following the warning period, police will begin mailing actual Notices of Infraction to motorists caught speeding by the photo radar cameras in 60 initial "enforcement zones" throughout the city, with a special emphasis on school zones. While photo-enforced violations do not carry points in the District, the fines for speeding range from \$30 to \$200 per violation. For complete information about DC's automated speed enforcement program, including diagrams on how the technology works, visit:

[www.mpd.org](http://www.mpd.org) (Click on Services & Programs)

*In addition to the new photo radar cameras, the Chief also announced two new applications of DC's highly successful red-light camera system. "Speed on green" will generate citations for motorists who dangerously speed through green lights at intersections equipped with cameras. Also, the red-light cameras will begin citing motorists who commit right-turn-on-red violations by not coming to a complete stop – a major pedestrian safety issue.*

*The MPDC is also acquiring 70 sophisticated new laser guns that will enhance officer enforcement of speeding. Among other problems, laser enforcement will focus on speeders who exceed the posted speed limit by more than 30 mph – an arrestable offense in DC – during the late-night and early-morning hours. For more information on these other anti-speeding approaches, read the news release at:*

[www.mpd.org](http://www.mpd.org) (Click on News)

## TOUGHER MARIJUANA LAWS NET FIRST QUANTITY-BASED ARREST

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For years, DC laws treated most marijuana offenses – even those involving significant quantities – as misdemeanor possession crimes. Recently, however, the DC Council significantly toughened DC's marijuana laws, creating the felony offense of Possession with the Intent to Distribute Marijuana. On June 29, members of the First District's Focused Mission Team made what is believed to be the first quantity-based arrest under the new law (previous arrests have been made felonies because of the prior criminal history of the suspects). The arrests came as the result of a covert operation which resulted in the seizure of 12 pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$68,000. A 37-year-old DC man and a 39-year-old woman were arrested in the James Creek Housing Community in SW. Additional information on the arrests can be found at:

[www.mpd.org](http://www.mpd.org) (Click on News)

## NEW POLICE TRAINING AND STANDARDS BOARD BEGINS OPERATION IN THE DISTRICT

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Soon after becoming chief of the MPDC in April 1998, Chief Ramsey proposed the creation of a professional police officer standards board -- a first in DC. His proposal was eventually incorporated into the Omnibus Police Reform Amendment Act of 2000, legislation that created the DC Police Officer Training and Standards Board, a body that is responsible for establishing police officer hiring and training standards for the MPDC. Modeled after POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) Boards found in all 50 states, the DC Board will set standards for the hiring, training, ethical conduct and retention of police officers through certification and licensing of personnel. The Board's work ensures that the citizens of DC have police officers who meet industry-recognized standards of competency and professionalism. On June 29, Mayor Williams swore in the 11 members of the newly created Board, which includes the Mayor, the Chief, top criminal justice officials, police and community representatives, and a criminal justice educator. For more information about the DC Police Officer Training and Standards Board, go to:

[www.mpdc.org](http://www.mpdc.org) (Click on Services & Programs)

## KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT FILING A CITIZEN COMPLAINT

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The MPDC is dedicated to providing professional, high-quality police services to all, and the Department does not tolerate wrongdoing on the part of its members. If you believe you have been subjected to, or witnessed, misconduct by any Metropolitan Police officer, regardless of his or her rank, there are two avenues for filing your complaint. You can contact the MPDC's Office of Professional Responsibility at 1-800-298-4006 (toll-free) or 202-727-4385. If your complaint involves excessive force, harassment, demeaning language or conduct, discrimination or retaliation on the part of an officer, you may also call DC's new Office of Citizen Complaint Review at 202-727-3838. The MPDC and the OCCR take all citizen complaints seriously, and all complaints are investigated thoroughly and fairly. Learn more about the complaint filing and investigation process by clicking on:

[www.mpdc.org](http://www.mpdc.org) (Click on Services & Programs)

## REORGANIZATION ANNOUNCED WITHIN SPECIAL SERVICES COMMAND

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Chief Ramsey has announced changes within the MPDC's Special Services Command, which is commanded by Assistant Chief Alfred Broadbent. With the impending retirement of Michael Radzilowski, commander of the Special Operation Division, the Chief has reassigned José Acosta to be the new SOD commander. Acosta has previously been commander of the Special Investigations Division. Many functions of the SID are being transferred to a new Special Investigations Branch, commanded by Captain Victor Brito. SIB is now part of the Office of the Superintendent of Detectives, headed by Commander Jack Barrett. Telephone numbers and addresses of these and all major units within the MPDC can be found at:

[www.mpdc.org](http://www.mpdc.org) (Click on Telephone Directory)

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*Information, ideas or comments about this service?*

*E-mail Kevin Morison, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at [kmorison\\_mpdc@excite.com](mailto:kmorison_mpdc@excite.com).*

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